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## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

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*Conditions of Labor in American Industries.* By W. JETT LAUCK and EDGAR SYDENSTRICKER. New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1917. Pp. ix+403. \$1.75.

The insistent demand in recent years by groups of laborers and social reformers that the conditions of life of wage-earners be improved has, as is well known, resulted in a number of investigations by government commissions, bureaus of labor, and students of the labor movement. The output is considerable and widely scattered. Students will, and others should, therefore, welcome a work which aims to present "a summarization of the principal and fundamental facts that have been ascertained during the past decade and a half" in these investigations, and especially a volume which attempts to give but the mere facts, wherever possible in a convenient statistical table, with only such conclusions as seem to be clearly warranted by the facts. Use them as you may, the facts remain.

The book may be divided into two parts: "working conditions" and "living conditions." The first is introduced by a statistical statement of the labor force and followed by a discussion of wages and earnings and the annual incomes of wage-earners' families. Conditions causing irregular employment, hours of labor, industrial accidents, occupational disease, employers' methods (welfare, scientific management, etc.), and woman and child labor are treated with more or less detail. Under "living conditions" the adequacy of wages and earnings, the wage-earner's health, diet, housing conditions, etc., are entered into rather briefly. The material (in the main) is taken from the reports of the investigators for the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations, from the reports of the Immigration Commission, from the United States and state bureaus of labor, and from a number of private investigations, and presented, it might be said in passing, without undue modification. American conditions and American writers fill the pages almost exclusively.

We are told in the preface that the authors had "to sacrifice much interesting and some illuminating data." We must assume—the authors do not discuss the matter—that they had a theory of selection which

determined the character and quantity of the material which was included. The work is offered "as a summarization of the *principal* and *fundamental* facts" of recent investigations. The compilers no doubt had in mind certain specific labor problems or conditions upon which light would be thrown by their collection of data, for without specific problems there are no facts. The question that naturally arises then is: How broadly have the authors conceived labor problems and what have they picked out as the most important data to aid in their solution? Incidentally this involves the question also of the care and thoroughness with which the facts have been organized.

A chapter is devoted to "The Labor Force," in which is presented the racial composition of our industrial workers, the extent of trade-union membership, as well as the number of women and children in industry. That these are useful facts for *some* purposes we may well believe—although nothing is said upon this important point—but it might be seriously questioned whether they are the most significant facts to be included under a chapter so headed; whether they give us much insight into the living reality and dynamic force of the labor movement. The workers are not only *found in* industry, they are *transforming* it. And what they are attempting to do cannot be adequately revealed by their racial composition or by the size of their unions, for their group programs cut across such classification. In other words, one will not criticize the chapter if he seeks so-called "useful" facts. He will question it if he is after facts of fundamental significance.

The major portion of the book deals with wages and hours, unemployment, accidents, etc. These are *the* conditions of labor. It is quite comprehensible that this point of view should be taken. Business unionists, social reformers, and legislators have busied themselves almost exclusively with these matters, and there is a respectable body of easily organizable data at hand. The problems are more or less related to one another, they can be easily assimilated by an intelligent reader, and hardly any discussion of remedies need be entered into, because minimum-wage laws, workmen's compensation, social insurance, etc., are familiar to all. One's assumptions will go unchallenged because one drifts with the current of a stream of social tendencies. Hence a collection of mere facts without any critical discussion of them meets a practical need. But for all that, some readers who do not look too closely into statistical tables to find inaccuracies or into the question of the organic arrangement of the parts of a volume will ask themselves, Do we not need other facts dealing with the fundamental aspects of the

wages system, facts concerned with the whole scheme of social arrangements, facts throwing light on the programs of diverse labor and social groups? Do we not, in a word, need facts on these matters before we shall have *the* knowledge we need to solve our pressing labor problems?

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*The Development of Transportation in Modern England.* By W. T. JACKMAN. Cambridge, England: University Press, 1916. Pp. ix+820, bound in two volumes. 24s. net.

If we grant the truth of Macaulay's famous statement regarding the importance in the history of civilization of improvement in the means of communication and transportation, we must recognize that the history of the means by which men have abridged distance has been shamefully neglected. It has been treated only incidentally, or has been taken in hand by social historians of the old fashion, who constructed their work of individual fragments vivid with local color, but lacking connection with the institutional fabric of the period and without general significance. English historians have been behind their Continental brethren in applying new methods to the investigation of the field, but interest in it has awakened in recent years, and the present work provides a study worthy of its subject and fit to stand beside the best works of its kind.

The author sketches in an introductory chapter the conditions of transportation in Roman Britain and in mediaeval England, but makes "modern" England, in the period between 1500 and 1850, the particular object of his investigation. The first volume covers the history of internal transportation by land and by water down to 1830, including the great canal era and the beginnings of steam navigation; the second volume traces the early development of railways and their competition with roads and canals down to the middle of the last century.

The author gives in his first chapter a sample of the method that makes his work so valuable, in his examination of the statements of Thorold Rogers and others, that roads were good and communication was easy in mediaeval England. Evidence is presented both for and against these propositions, but the author here as later considers, not merely the "what," but also the "why," of things that he discusses, and finds a sufficient explanation of the low rates of land carriage in economic conditions quite apart from the character of the roads. So